



CENTER FOR COMMUNITY JOURNALISM AND DEVELOPMENT

Engaged Journalism for Better Communities



Tubod, Lanao del Norte leg of the dialogue series held July 23, 2003 at the Mindanao Civic Center in partnership with the Mindanao Institute of Journalism and the Forum of Reporters for Empowerment and Equality-Mindanao

CCJD Dialogue Series on Silencing Community Journalists:

Suppressing the Truth?

The Center for Community Journalism and Development (CCJD) since June this year has been conducting a series of nationwide, multi-sectoral dialogues on the killings of community press members to discuss their impact on journalistic practice and people's right to information.

The dialogues use a rights-based approach focusing on the recognition of human rights as universal, inalienable, indivisible, interrelated and interdependent, providing the foundation for a life of dignity and worth.

So far, three major dialogues have been conducted in Bicol, Western Visayas and Western Mindanao with major outputs forming the basis of follow-through activities scheduled for 2004.

In the Bicol region, media groups like the Albay Press Association (ALPA), the Journalists of Bicol (JOB) whose members come from the different Bicol provinces, and the Social Action Center-Legazpi which have been working with the CCJD on public journalism projects, conducted two workshops on human rights for journalists and citizens and began preliminary work on forming a multi-sector Media Community Action Board that would: (1) provide supplementary skills and professional upliftment training for journalists in partnership with CCJD and other media NGOs or academic institutions (2) draw up a mechanism for continuing interfaces between media and other sectors (3) link up with human rights organizations like the Task Force Detainees of the Philippines, Ateneo Human Rights Center on continuing HR education.

Western Visayas media, academe, church, business, NGOs formed after the July 12 dialogue, an ad hoc committee composed of different sectors to look more deeply into the implications of the killings and develop human rights and journalism training modules for media practitioners in the region.

In Mindanao, journalists, representatives from government agencies and the military, NGOs, church and academe agreed to: (1) launch a "linked" radio program spearheaded by DXOC in Ozamiz City to open a continuing community discussion of why cases like Damalerio's have remained unsolved in

Mindanao (2) Rotary Club and Pagadian City's Our Lady of Fatima parish to help provide skills building opportunities to address the issue of journalistic professionalism.

At the national level, the CCJD has been promoting the efforts of the Freedom Fund for Filipino Journalists in various workshops, conferences and consultations, the latest of which was the Singilang Bayan, a rights and citizen-based accountability mechanism that examines how government action or inaction impacts on people's lives. It is also working with the Forum on Democratic Options as a platform for projecting on the wider public agenda the implications of the killings of community journalists for governance, for citizens' right to know, and for democracy.

The Center for Community Journalism and Development is a facility for journalists working with citizens, communities and institutions for social change. It promotes, encourages, and supports public journalism as a way of connecting journalists with citizens.